

The Republican Women of:
Madrid 1936



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GREETING TO ALL RETURNING EMIL FANS AND BYPASSE

Without a lot of fanfare or even notice by the public, Emil has again slipped into the shady underbelly of being a ghost after we received some rather omniums, stern disapproval over Emil's overt support of the situation in Hong Kong generated by several associates (how can I say?) having a friendly relationship with authorities in the People's Republic and they feared that Emil's recent experiences in Hong Kong has tainted his (and thus our) ability to subjective view/evaluate the purely internal situation now playing out amongst the misguided, spoiled and generally, pampered denizens of the former English Crown Colony and the very patient Chinese Central Government.

Being smart business people and being in current negotiations with interested parties to expand our publishing into the People's Republic, we very quickly agreed with them and put a hold on Emil's "Hong Kong Dairy" edition that was set for publishing.

Being Emil's longest and at times, his only friend, I felt a serious need to give him a head's up to what we were being told.

Upon this, we agreed to publish this instead and without further words, Emil left to an undisclosed location but with access to the internet as he is still posting to his website and others. Stupid!



Emil

GLAD TO SEE ALL MY FELLOW COMPADRES, MY CREW CADRE IN THE EXPOSING THE PROMOTERS, MERCHANTS OF “UNTRUTH”

This edition is far different than what I had originally been going to submit for your kind consideration and readership.

This edition is far from the “Hong Kong Diary” that was originally planned and that was ready for publication.

Seine and WWWG expressed deep concerned for my personal safety as they discreetly informed me that there were those who seriously thought that my six weeks of “Attitude Adjustment” had failed to impress upon me how little true humor there remains in the world, especially with any issue dealing with the Chinese – it would truly seem that there are many in a position(s) of authority who can’t take a joke and because they were so thin-skinned, there might be some trouble for me.

I am not unlike my old drinking bud, Dick Cheney, I am in an undisclosed location...buried, barrowed in and hunkered down awaiting for this to all blow over and the current situation in Hong Kong spreads like a wildfire and consumes the whole of China with the call for “Freedom.”



Part of the problem was after I posted this opinion and observation about the current drama unfolding in Hong Kong.

"Coming on the heels of the anniversary, Tiananmen Square, this bodes very bad for the brave denizens of Hong Kong; for the old men in Beijing and their entrenched cadre army of clerks and accountants will not, can not let this stand unanswered!

2 Million brave souls from all walks of life were all drawn together by the historic words of Chairman Mao (the famous, former CEO of China Inc.)

"Revolution starts when one man stands up and says **NO!**"

Here 2 million people stood all at once and in solitary not seen in China since Tiananmen Square...they stood to say that freedom is most important.

They (old party members) cannot (won't) let this stand unchallenged...for to do so would spread this cancer throughout the country like a uncontrollable wild fire...

Today 2 million in Hong Kong, tomorrow 10 million in Shanghai...

They believe to not punish the spoiled and pampered denizens of the former English Colony might bring by next year, the practical end of the Communist Party or at best a return to the dark days of the Cultural Revolution.



We must do more than merely light a candle, say a prayer and this time and unlike what the world did at Tiananmen Square, we must not just turn a blind ear to the pain and suffering for freedom and find common cause and support!

Trotsky once wrote that history is not changed by you standing on the sidewalk and watching the future march by you...you must join the march to freedom. It is now time to join the parade, to be on the right side of history and march off to the future hand-n-hand with the masses of our friends in Hong Kong who are only asking to be free – with or without **FREE** parking."

@joechina

@freehongkong

<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-china-48656471>

Seems that there were those who thought that I traveled to that bridge too far and had shown that I am incapable of learning my lesions and that, if in their power(s) they might want to reach out to offer me a more intensive, **FREE** (at no cost to me other than my Freedom) and extended version of my re-education to make me a better, socialist citizen.

Emil

A framed painting of a woman with a floral wreath. The woman has dark, curly hair and is wearing a white, draped garment. A large, dense wreath of white flowers is positioned behind her head. The painting is set within a gold-colored frame.

Emil



Still waiting for this Chinese thing to blow over or for them to find a bigger fish to fry...like 2 million Chinese (in Hong Kong) saying that "Freedom" was worth picking a fight with the dragon and the whole of the People's Army (itching to fight someone, like last time out they got smarted by the Vietnamese...they should have asked us before they picked that fight...think???).

Anyway, I took a kind offer to do some couch surfing at the primo of all undisclosed bunker locations...Halliburton sure did right by Dick and this bunker proves that beyond any doubt.

Over the past several days as a house quest with my new, old buddy Dick Cheney; I have discovered that in a social setting he isn't a bad short of guy...that is as long as you limit your conversation to not include Georgie Bush, any of the other Bush family and don't start that conversation about weapons of mass destruction...it is a long discussion...

"Saddam, was such a jerk...if he would have kept the dollar for oil trading, cut us a good distribution fee and even, just told us the truth about those WMDs...I could have kept old Georgie in his place..bigger fish to fry over there in Iran..."

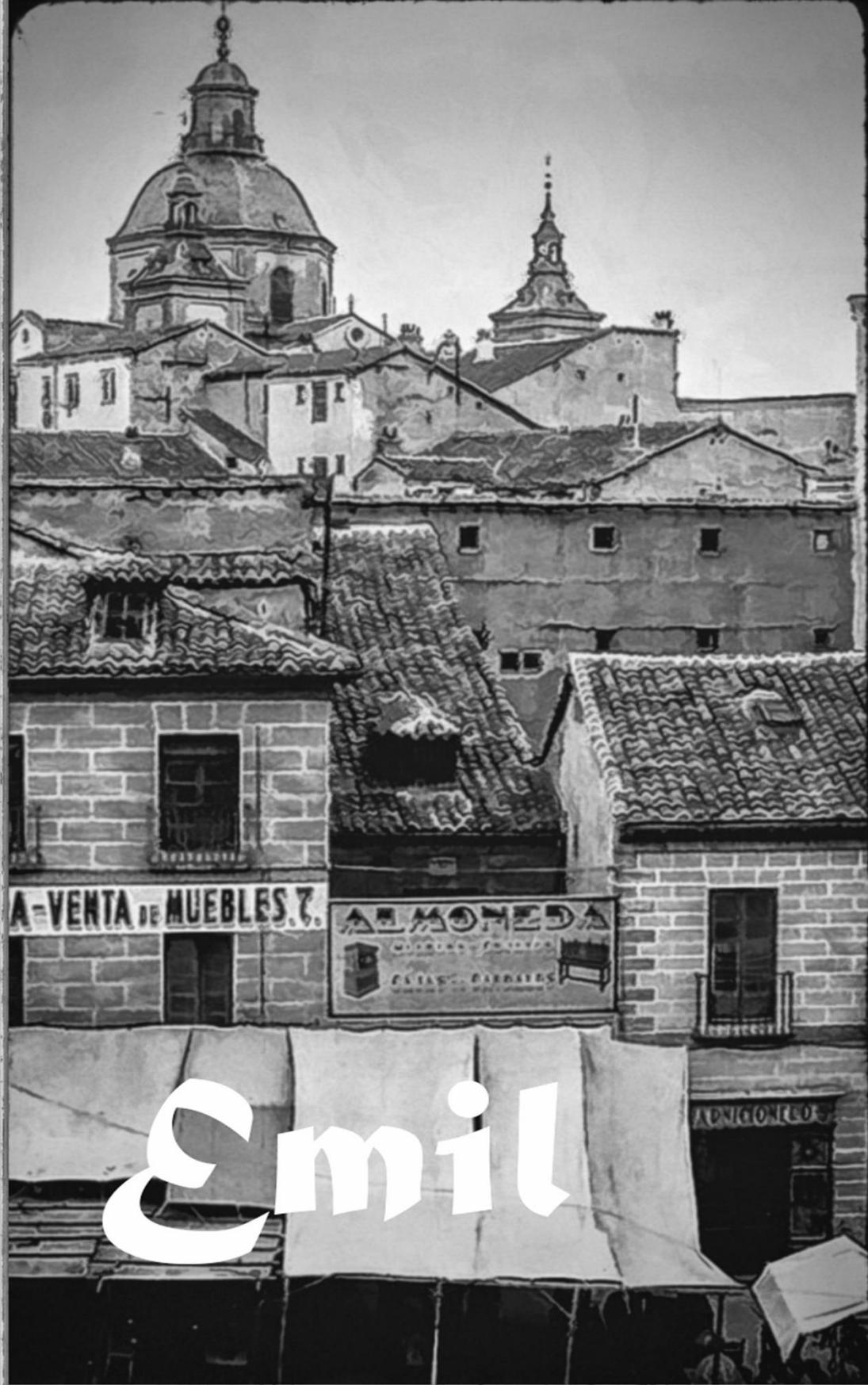
Believe me it went on from there....

You kind of learn these things as you go...

"Hey Dick...how about that Georgie Bush?"

Opps!

#joechina





Guess it is about time that I think about moving on as Dick 's daughter strongly tried to imply...in fact those were kind of her very words other than my need to delete a few of the more graphic verbiage in her version... Seems that at least for now, the Chinese Thought Police did find bigger fish to fry or so has Dick 's daughter informed me...

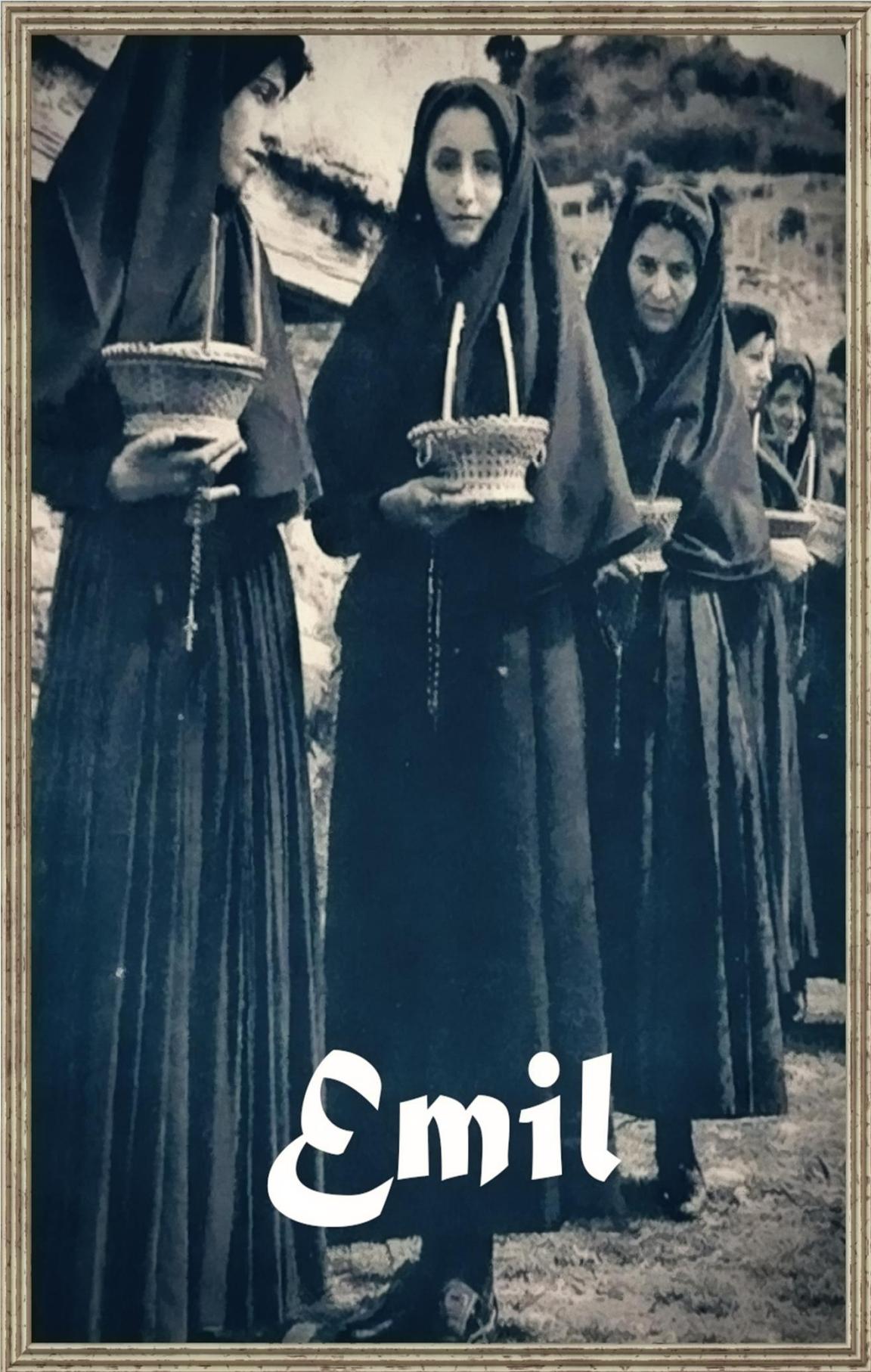
"So. you will be moving on, right?"

Have an assignment coming up in Laos...in Savannakhit...toward the end of July ...

Maybe, a slow boat to Laos...is there still any such thing?

As long as it goes the southern route and bypasses China, I should be fine...you know it is my very nature to tempt the fates but, even I, I am not really that stupid...

More later as Dick 's daughter is kindly offering me a free ride to the Greyhound Station...right now...she seems rather rushed...



Emil

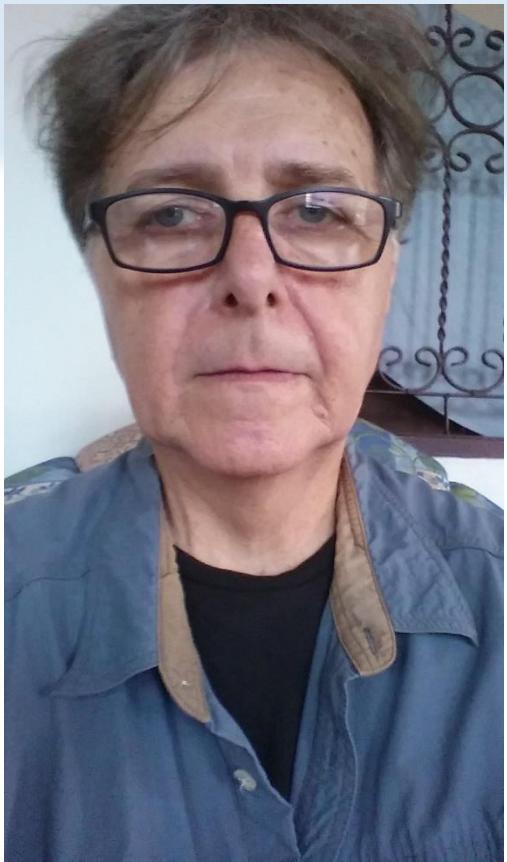


Made it as far as Billings before my funds ran dangerously low, the Greyhound Bus dumped me mere blocks away from the University but, I am now stranded until, I guess, I can finish this Madrid Assignment and get my next advance check from WWWG to fund my continued return passage back to Asia and then, off to my next posting in Laos before the end of the month...

I decided to set up my portrait and doodling stand down in front of the University this morning, well not right in front of the university as I was asked (brutally told) by the local militia, rent-a-cops (seriously in real hobnailed boots, my Fuhrer!) to move it further down the block - which will, no doubt, hurt my potential exposure and sales. Some smart (ass) students suggested that I set up a "Go Fund Me" page titled "Sending the Old Man Home."

A vintage-style advertisement for the brand 'Emil'. The image is framed by a decorative border. Inside the frame, a woman in a cowboy hat and a man in a suit are standing in a rugged, outdoor setting. The woman is holding a bottle and a glass. The word 'Emil' is written in a large, white, serif font at the bottom of the frame.

Emil



Hopefully, Seine will see this and realize that me on "Go Fund Me" might very well look bad for and say volumes for the corporate greed of WWWG...

Are ya listening, Seine????

According to the nice lady at Western Union, you can send me money here to their office in Billings.

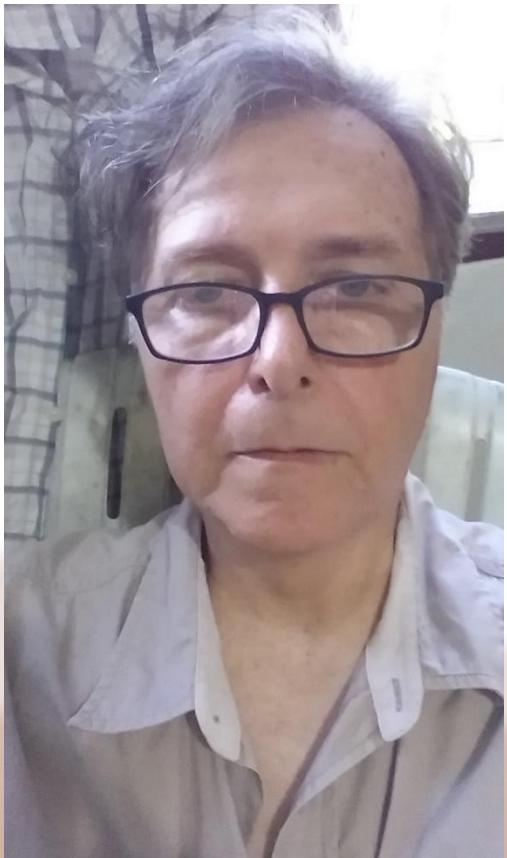
"Hey! Lady, I am an artist but, I don't want to be starving! \$5 bucks is a cheap price to pay for your portrait!!!"

"No officer, I wasn't bothering the nice lady!"

"Yes, officer, I do have a permit...where is it??? Dang! I must have left it back at the shelter..."

"Yes sir, I was just packing up and I promise that you won't see my face around here, not ever again...I do promise...I am a man of my word...No, I don't want to talk about it at the station...Like I am a Veteran, you know...the big one...the war, you know!"

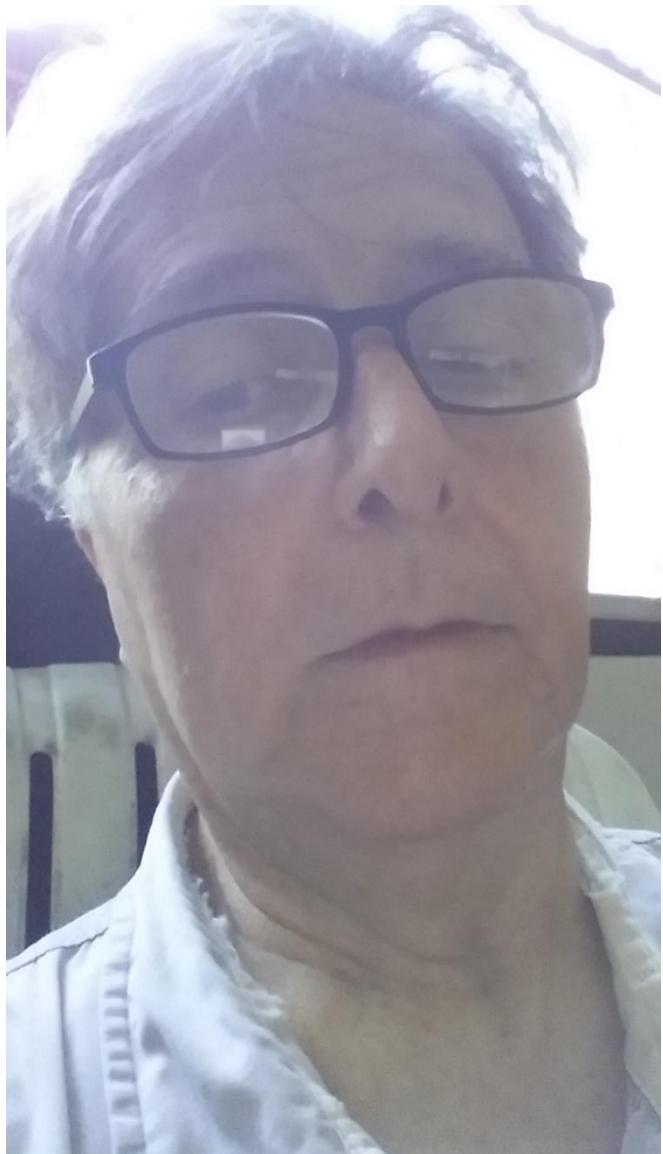
"Appreciate your kindness...I will be going now!"





Emil

SUCH IS THE EVIL CIRCLE OF UTTER POVERTY...BUMMER!



Such is the evil circle of utter poverty...Bummer!

Outlasting yet another long day...I am way too lazy, too tired to get any of the past due assignments done...Can generate NO interest in doing much of anything...Just feeling empty...Bored.

Actually, to be truthful - in a means of full disclosure, I am not feeling anything at this point in the day...

Then, it gets worse and turns ugly from that jumping off point, there not even anything good on the cable...

I would smoke them if I had them but, seeing that I have yet to finish any of these existing projects, I don't have the funds to buy any more Cubans...

Such is the evil circle of utter poverty...Bummer!



So much for my soap opera as seen from a top of my old, wooden soapbox, I will get down...

Please allow me sit down for a moment or two?

All this political craziness wears me out quickly these days...but, I still have the touch!

Did ya see how I worked even Trotsky (a good Jewish boy – I can say that because my ancestry is much the same as his...and if it wasn't for my dad's family blood and my deep love of bacon, I to would be) into the conversation...

Pretty good for a card-carrying Libertarian, don't you think? Uhh?

What does any of this have to do with this book?

Nothing but yet, it is core to understanding what it felt to be in Madrid, in the last part of June, 1936, and to help you feel how electric the air in the city was, how it was alive with the winds of great political and social changes.

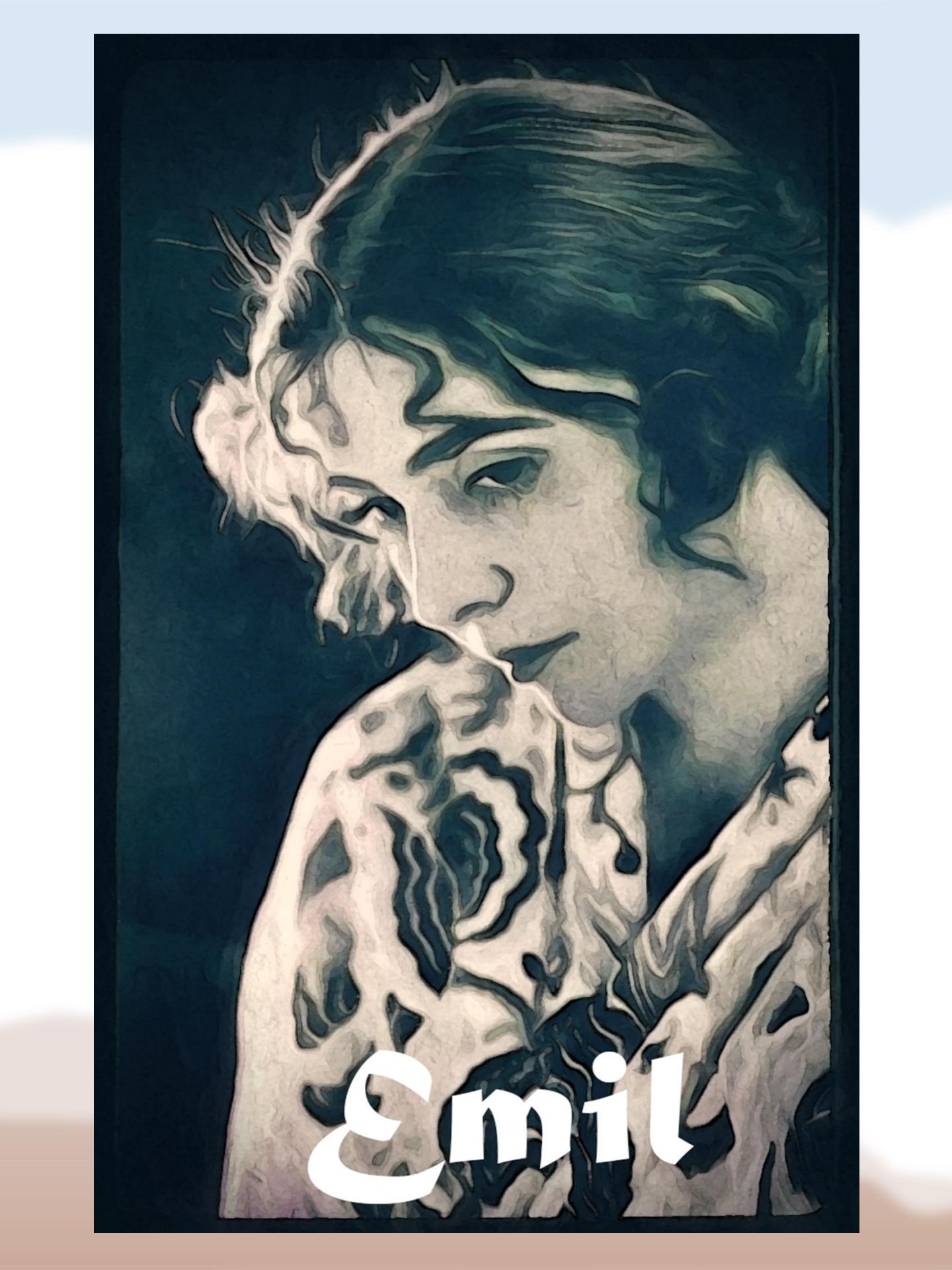
Viva Republic!

The Republic had been declared!

People were now free and alive with the thirst of all of the opportunities and promises of the new socialist, yes but, a Republic!

In this brave new world, Republican Woman were now equal to men and were treated as such...and even though there was a terrible rumbling coming from Africa, the new world was ours!

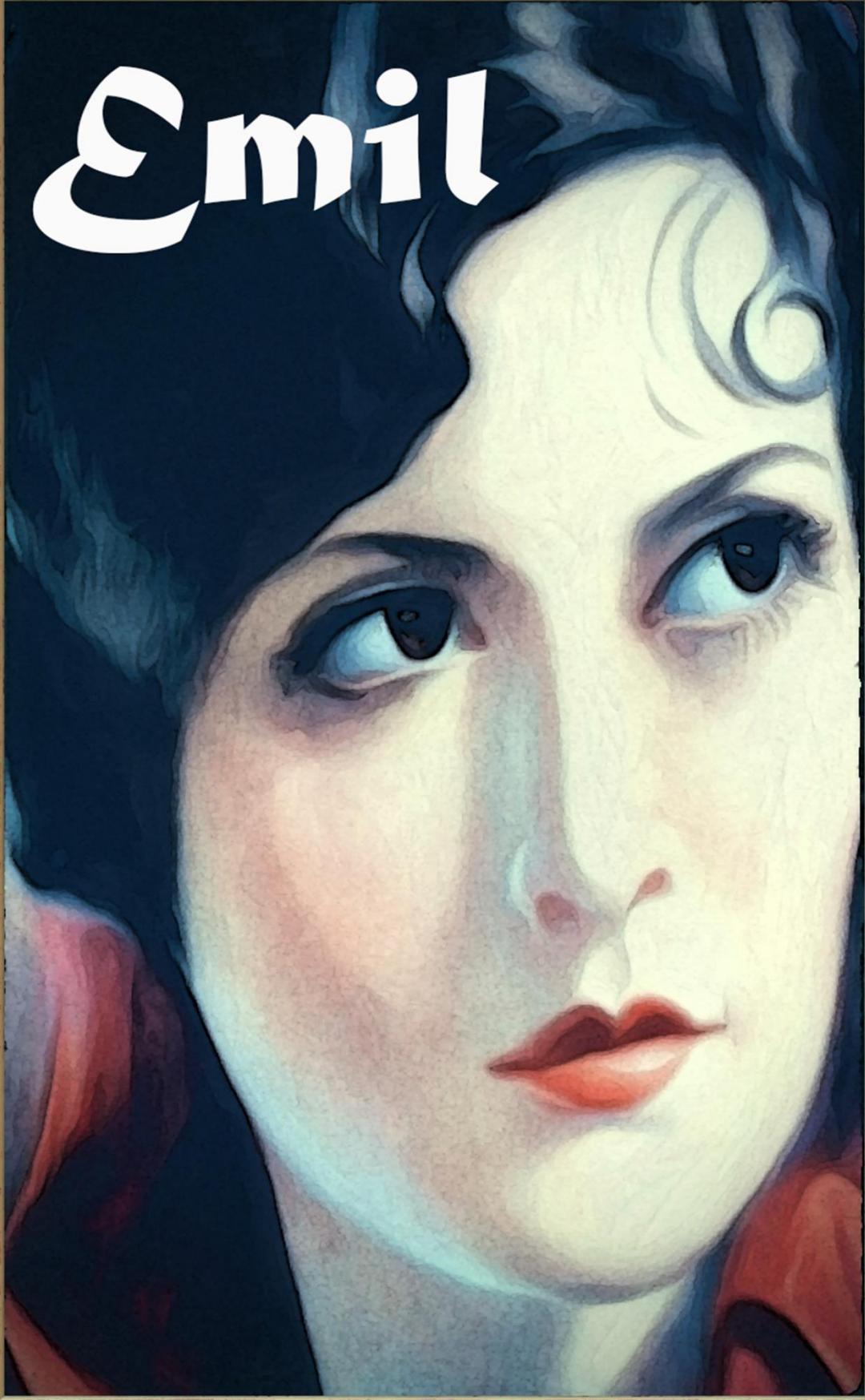




Emil



Emil



FRESH OFF THE PLANE

First impressions of Madrid did not fill us with awe. It had been an already long trip from Havana and we had some time to kill as the Pan Am plane had developed a serious amount of engine trouble flying in on this last leg of our trip from the Azores. It was Claudio's bright idea to go stretch our legs and explore the city "see the sights as we are already here."

After a few moments of second and third thoughts as to the wisdom of taking Claudio's suggestion, the last time we did that was when we followed his lead and jumped ship there in Havana Harbor and then, after ten years, we finally had the capital to leave; we took a taxi downtown.

Claudio had sweeten the pot by telling us that he knew a few girls and that they would be happy to show us around but, for me, the main selling point that swung my vote was when Claudio informed us that Madrid was the dive bar capital of the world and there was one bar for about every 500 residences – and, this is a very large urban city...that's a lot of bars.

As the taxi drove the long way, the sightseeing special that taxi drivers learn regardless of the country...take the tourists the long way to and then triple your normal fare), we saw quite a bit of the city in passing.



Emil

FRESH OFF THE PLANE

The city seemed to be an aggregate collection of old masonry dating back to ancient Roman Times, all fragmentary with age etched on the edges.

This was a city that is seriously being blighted by this whole 20th Century, urban sprawl thing that spread the extended city out across the a sandy plateau reach deep into the waste of arid landscape that rings the outer edges of Madrid's Civilization.

It all reminded me a bit of the growing desert cities in Texas like Dallas while if you came from a place like Arizona, you would feel well at home with the surround countryside.

Much later, as we actually attempted to walk about in the noon day sun, there is a very serious lack of natural shade and water, albeit there are tree-planted walks and gardens, with cedars and Himalayan pines, and fountains with a surprising fullness of cool and clear flow that city leaders so smartly made sure were available to its denizens in mass abundance.

Locals told me that there is actual a river that flows in-n-about the city. It might be mere rumor or mythology that it actually exists.

They called it the "Manzanares", but when we did stumble across it, it was more like an open, almost dry ditch...even the Los Angeles River would lay this to shame.



Emil

FRESH OFF THE PLANE

So, the labeling of this as dry ditch a river was either meant as a kindness to its efforts or as a joke that local tour guides play on tourists, Carlos (the hotel's resident Madrid expert and according to them, a primo tour guide) offered us a full day tour, riverside. Luckily, it was out of our price range, we retreated back to the buffet table in the hotel's bar and to stock up on the Free food...which complimented the overpricing the bar did on their selection of watered down drinks.

What is with these people of Madrid?

What is this fascination with Sherry?

It is like the national drink...and the menus waxed on about what might have been 99 different types of Sherry being offered from their selection.

I am sorry but, where we are from, Sherry is one of those girly drinks but, here even the most manly looking characters were downing mass qualities of Sherry, one little, fancy wine glass at a time.

My great aunt keep sherry in her food closet and would sip an occasional taste when my uncle was off at work.

To be truthful, I doubt that even she (as a tea-toddler, outstanding lady of community and church) ever got a real buzz.



FRESH OFF THE PLANE

And campers, please don't try expressing that in public or get even more insulting by trying to order a real man's drink like Rum, Rye Whiskey or my new favorite, Tequila, if you do (please be pre-warned) better watch closely to make sure that what are pouring in your glass.

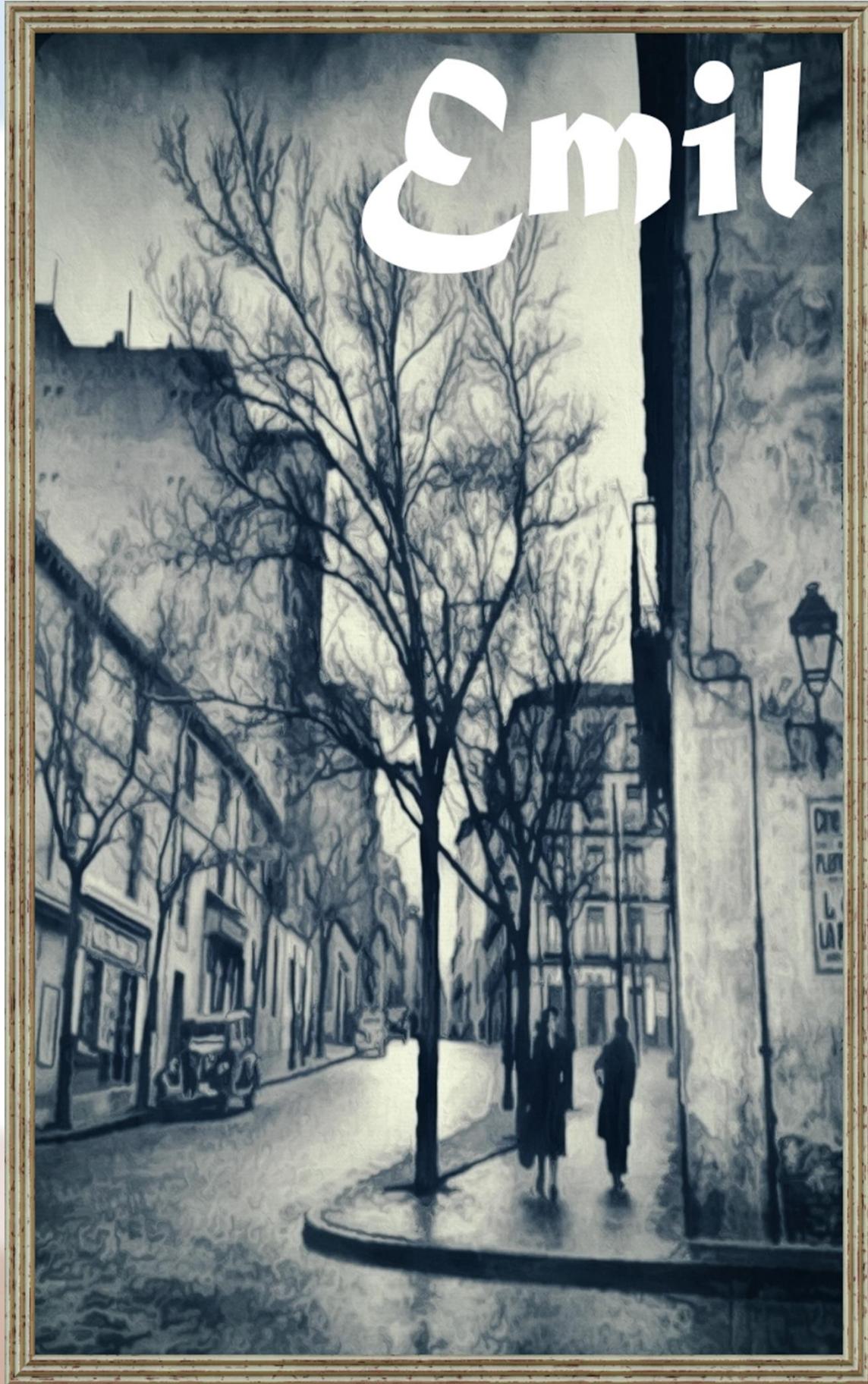
Back out on the street in this God awful, this rugged, sun-blistered city, Claudie's girls had yet to show up and I for one was having serious doubts and was rethinking the wisdom of following Claudie on this fool's errant.

Sitting in the impressive lobby of a hotel that I am sure that even collectively, we might not be able to pay our bill on check out and I started looking for additional exits that a man (down on his luck and short of coin) might find a quick and stealth passage late in the night or in the early hours when even the bellhops would be asleep and lead him out to the freedom of the waiting city sidewalk without even a mention of our post due billings and expenses.

As we sulked, good friend Carlos (remember him...the tour guide) flopped down with yet another advertisement for his services.

He could well see that we were having trouble with the blistering heat (Yes...We are from Havana and it is hot there but, they have a thing that is called humidity that when mixed with a small breeze, made it all bearable)

Emil



FRESH OFF THE PLANE

and immediately started to inform us that in the northern distance of the city are the summits of the Guadarrama hills, and waxed on about the unseen, wintertime breeze which sweeps down from its snowy eyries amongst them cuts like an icicle.

“So you like to go?”

Instead, Claudie ran in a huff and the next thing I know we are in yet another taxi headed to the central point of Madrid, the Puerta del Sol—which a bare, broad, irregular area of traffic nightmare as there are nine, major thoroughfares diverge out of this central hub but, where Claudie swears that the girls are awaiting our arrival.

And after yet another hour and still the girls are nowhere to be seen, I went and watered my heels in the cool waters in the slightly blue vortex of the waters in the square’s central pool.

I was fortunate as I was later informed that it was or might be illegal to take off your shoes and go diving for coins that lay on the bottom of the pond.

I made a good killing and walked away with about thirty pesos and a strangely, I found a large number of German Mark coins...must be a lot of Germans vacating here?

As the sun faded and we had a serious need to get out of the hot, late afternoon sun, we boldly walked into the Fonda de Paris, which is a hotel at the corner of



FRESH OFF THE PLANE

the Calle de Alcalá, the principal avenue leading from the Plaza, as if we were paying customers tied from a long day of sightseeing in the square.

As proof of the unsettled condition of affairs and its effect upon trade, it need only be said that at the *table d'hôte* of this, the first hotel in the capital, where one hundred and thirty persons usually sit down to dinner, there were not more than fifteen or twenty, and a proportion of these were fly-about Special Correspondents milling about, nursing a drink and trying to decide if the real story was the formation of the Republic or if it was about all those rumours of an loyalist army being raised in Morocco by...

What was his Name?

Something like Franco...he is some Spanish General or something who has openly call the Republic a foul bunch of Soviet Communists and it was rumoured that he was well funded by the Germans...

Hum?

Germans?

Made me pause and take those German Mark Coins out of my pocket and I stared down at the stern image of Adolf Hitler before plopping them up on the bar and asked for a bottle of Sherry...

When in Rome, right?



FRESH OFF THE PLANE

What we also where to discover was that Madrid was awash with political paranoid and there was further rumours regarding the exiguous circle of prudent people who were being detained in Madrid by one revolutionary faction or yet another, or how only the most foolhardy people were still travelling here and thus, Old Lady Luck bit us big time as we turned up here as the irrepressible crew, suspiciously just off the plane from Havana just as everything was about to hit the shit!

“Do they look German?”

This seems to be the undercurrent of whisper that we had failed to hear and so, it never registered with our special Spider Senses of locating trouble.

We surely didn’t know until it was too late and I was starting to regret not just staying there on the plane and flirting with that cute stewardess from Atlanta.

Finally, two English girls from the British Embassy (not Claudie’s girls...thank you again, Claudie!!), with fresh peachy complexions, and hair like wavy masses of ripe maize; they somehow agreed to share a quick dinner at the hotel with us...thanks to Seine and the special way he has with people.

As two girls and three shifty, hobo looking guys from Havana was too much for even these English Girls, so, Seine excused himself and went off to wherever Seine always disappears to...regardless of our location...

Emil



FRESH OFF THE PLANE

After a nice, polite dinner, we helped them get a cab and then, we too went back to our own hotel alone (what do you expect? They are English and they both have day jobs at the embassy) and somewhat depressed as Claudie had promised so much more.





WHY SO ANGRY?"

"Why are you always so angry?"

I asked her out of real concern and not as a means to make things more difficult than they already were. It was late into another stormy, Virginia Wolfe descent into total debauchery and drunkenness as the night grew chilly...the drugs were not taking away from the first taste of this early winter's night...They didn't dull or ease the bite...

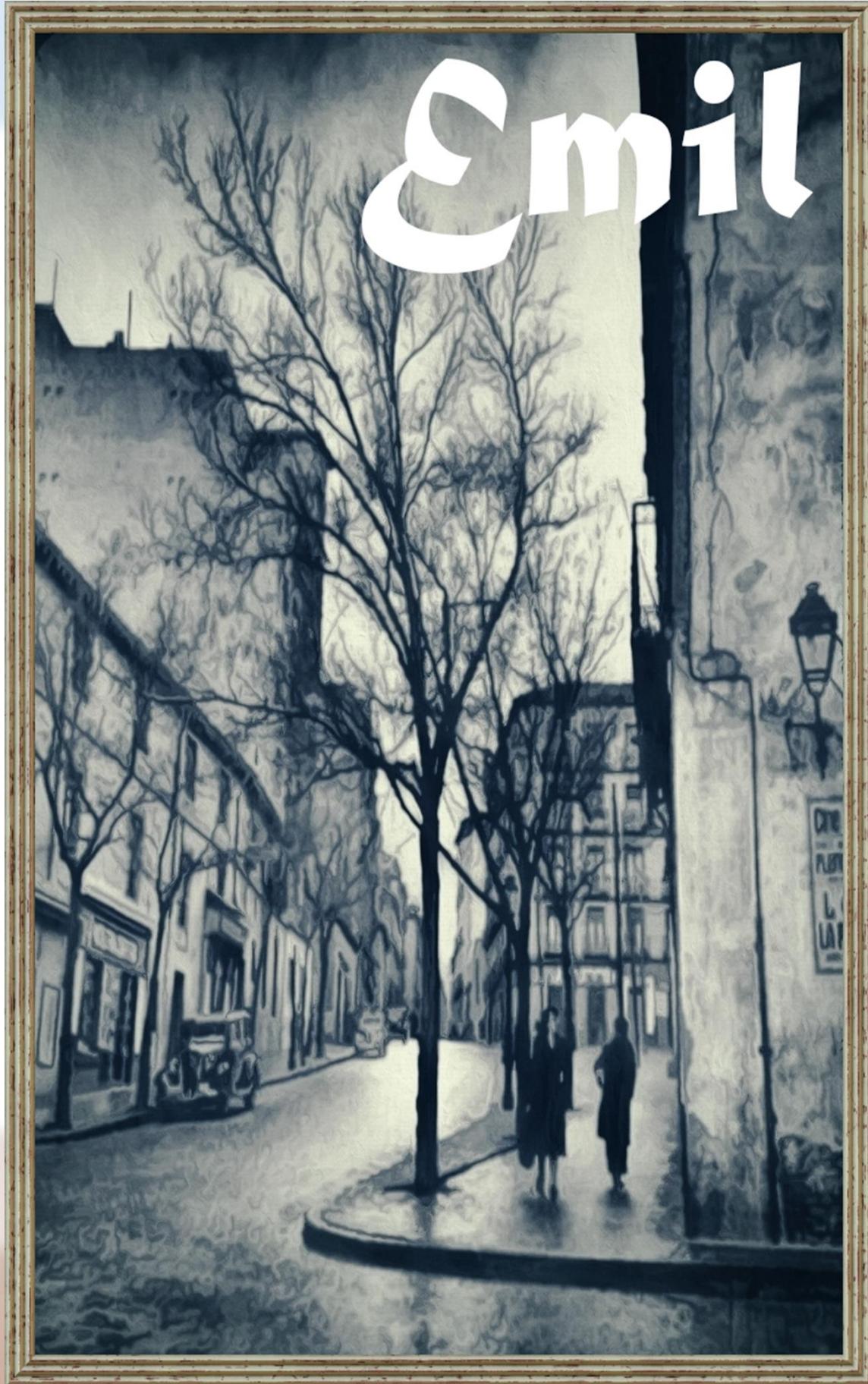
Sometimes I wonder if I don't secretly lust for the drama, to jump out into the arena of the conflict and that I don't really thrive upon the challenge or feel so much an inner compulsion towards the need to win every conversation.

In a sense of a crusader with God upon my right shoulder and with the drawn sword of truth that I knew you so hated, I boldly slash away at your crumbling defenses.

Wielding and delivering the jagged blows of truth seems so much an act of self-righteousness, a feeble excuse to indulging and descending down into the maelstrom of hurting your feelings and it is an ability that I can so wheel and stand up on the docket like the grasshopper banister that I fancy myself to be.

"Why so angry?" I taunted her again.

Emil



I didn't need to but, the sense of vanquish and route was heavy in the air and there was so little time left before the dawn and the fire was spent and all but death.

She looked at me and said nothing.

Really...what was there left to say that we hadn't already thrown out into the mix, brought to the table and used to trump the other in our crusader's errant to inflict pain and out of the sole dedication of trying to hurt each other for no other reason than the amusement of the fact that we could?

Sometimes I wish that we were different and that we could life but a normal life and find a middle path to living together in love instead of the resent that so tarnishes our ability to live together and drives us to such moments of high drama, conflict and pain.

As I grow older, the chase, the confrontation seems to be less a game than an endless battle in which we are both looser and at some point the victim...where there is no pretense of a need for solution nor resolve...like two old boxers slugging away long after the need to fight is done and gone. I repeated my winning refrain of "why so angry?" as she turned without comment and walked away.

Again, I am struck that we need to live this way as I waited for the dawn to break and I could go back to work.





TRULY, IS THIS NOT OUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

By Emil

Truly, is this not our purpose in life to crest this hill, return to the beaches and set torch to our ships before marching inland with Cortes...

You can never go back...

Tom Wolfe was so correct...

Always, we must decide to march off forward, Never can we retreat into the safe comfort of our past...

Live for today...

Live in this very moment,

The past is dust and if you continue to live in that graveyard, you can have no future...

Such random, these are troubling and utterly strange thoughts,

Are they not?

Maybe, 4 am is way much too early to stop drinking!

Waitress!!!

Kindly bring us another bottle..

Cuban Rum...

not that Damn cheap, distilled PR junk \$!#\$!!#\$





Emil

DAY TWO: BAD NEWS ABOUND

Seine had returned and he said that he had found us a local guide and at least, Seine felt that we could trust him.

He was an extremely tall swarthy man who didn't in the least even seem Spanish but, who Seine claimed was as fluent a linguist as there was in Madrid...at least, he spoke passable English and I will trust Seine as to his proficiency in Spanish.

He went by the name Antonio and he explained his untraditionally, Nordic features...

(Hey! Like Dudes! This is was like the 1930's and this is how everyone thought and acted back then) as he had a strain of English blood on the mother's side.

His dad may have been a South Sea cannibal or a South African lion-slayer for aught I remember what he actual told us as my interest was instantly drawn to the loud demonstration street side down from our hotel window.

Much later Seine would confess that Antonio had been a bandit in the neighborhood of Smyrna, or maybe he had been a displaced innkeeper from the Marseilles docks—much about the same thing but, importantly, that he was prepared to do little jobs of human carving for a consideration.

A black and white photograph of a woman with dark hair, looking upwards and slightly to the right with a neutral expression. She is wearing a dark, sequined, sleeveless dress with a ruffled hem. The background is dark and indistinct.

Emil

DAY TWO: BAD NEWS ABOUND

Overall I must say as a means of full discloser, he was a solemn but civil chap to me and he did not cheat me more than I chose. I never had occasion to ask him to kill anybody but, Seine said he could if we needed him to.

“Unless we needed him to kill someone?”

What in this world and the next has Claudie got us into?

What had started as a daily trip of hoping from dive bar to another with some attractive, delightful Spanish gals has turned into Seine hiring a bandit slash assassin to watch our backside.

I decided that I truly hated Claudie and was attempting to figure how much Antonio would want to take proper care of him for me when, Seine brought more bad news that they had fixed the plane and that plane with its cute stewardess from Atlanta had flow off to Roma without us.

Worst news was still to follow, Seine explained that in fact, a civil war had literary sprung up overnight and Pan Am was no longer flying into Madrid and either were most other commercial flights as there were rumours about German-maned bombers headed toward the city (this in fact was an ugly urban sales promotion) or at least that is what Carlos, the Tour guide, told me later in the lobby as he has switch from primo tour guide to expert human smuggler.



DAY TWO: BAD NEWS ABOUND

“Big Shitz about to come here to Madrid...You want to get out of Spain...best price just for you and your gentleman friends...Cheap...a bargain just for you my friend!”

Antonio gave him a gruffly side look and Carlos was already off with his sales pitch catching the attention of this elderly English couple.

Seine suggested that we eat breakfast and then, we could make plans on what to do next.

Seine is kind of a funny bird and luckily he was; he was the kind of person you could drop at a busy bus stop and within 15 minutes, he would know the most intimate details of everyone’s life, their cousins and would have at least four or five willing to defend him with their own life, if necessary.

Had Seine been more like us, we would never even made that midnight freighter within footsteps of trailing French Policemen and that act did save us from a long time in a French or English prison – all because we had collectively quit the war in 1917 and decided to forgive the Germans and we just never went back to the Northern Trenches after our leaves expired.

So, if nothing else, I trust Seine and value his reading of the situation even in the direst event(s) and Seine seemed to be of the opinion that things were not as bad as the hotel hustlers and tour guide Carlos were painting the situation here in Madrid.



DAY TWO: BAD NEWS ABOUND

Seine like us had become masters of survival in times of convict and war.

Hey Campers!

We did survive in the Killing Fields of the First Industrial War for almost two years when more seasoned and professional soldiers didn't for we learned more importantly than anything, we just knew when it was time to leave.

Seine didn't believe that we needed to be in a panic, "No need to rush! Let's see how this plays out, see the slights, romance some pretty Spanish gals and see if there is any opportunity to earn a dime or two before we do take to the highway, north..."

I did mention and did remind our little group that our financials were running low in the barrow, "We may need to hustle up travel funds..."

So the first item on our collective agenda was to find some "out of the way" café or dive bar to work out of...much as we had done in Havana.

This was our standard mode of operation and we did need a safe place to retreat to in case our proposed business venture(s) turned sour.

Still, I know that I could make a decent living off portraits and surrealistic doddles as I had in Havana if I could find a good club to patron with.



DAY TWO: BAD NEWS ABOUND

Upon this conclusion, we set out to scout locations, shake more than a few hands but, Seine instilled in us that spider sense rule number one, “at the first sign of trouble, make a beeline to the door...”

“Hey Seine! This ain’t our first Rodeo, ya know!”

By the time we met back at the hotel that evening, much of the hysteria of the morning had faded as the general public realized that the Civil war was a long ways a way from Madrid and more importantly, everyone still had to make a living – seems that everyone had thought through the process and realized that the civil war didn’t cancel their rent and that the family still had that nasty habit of wanting to eat on a regular basis.

So, the next morning, everyone got up and went to work.



Emil



Emil



WEEK TWO: NORMAL DAYS?

In short, from my hotel windows, everything seemed peaceful, almost downright sleepy as the denizens passed about to-and-from work or some other urgent business of the day – in other words, everything seemed in its place, peaceful and any panic thoughts about Franco's massing armies (rumoured to be financed by the Germans but then, they say the Republic is funded by Stalin and the International Communist Youth league...rumours?) was almost never mentioned in polite company. Down on the street, the same scene took on more dread and was froth with the likely chance for movements of utter terror if you had the look of a non-local as locally bully boys (who had formed something like the People's Force –it doesn't translate well into English) took it upon themselves to vigorously confront each and every foreigner as a German Spy.

“PAPERS! Please.”

“Brother, why do you need to see my papers and by the way friend, who authorized you to check my papers?”

“I am **NOT** your brother, you are a foreigner, you smell like a German spy and that gives me every right to investigate!”

“Are you a policeman?”



WEEK TWO: NORMAL DAYS?

“Are you a German Spy?”

“Think about this, if I were...why in this world would I share that information so freely with you? Let me call a policeman and we can settle this properly!”

“You are a German Spy and I will get a reward from the police for having found you...So let us call the police!”

“This is getting very stupid! You are wasting my day with your nonsense!”

“If I do call that policeman over there to come here, right or wrong, they will take you to the police house to sort things out...you could be there many days waiting to resolve this and regain your freedom... {He paused for that to sink in and then looked me in the eyes as he leaned in and continued in a hushed tone} Or my friend, you could just give me and my fellow patriots some drinking money, 100 Pesos should be about right...Your call, friend!”

This was a common shakedown if you unwisely traveled out and about without a proper, local escort, so most foreigners now become self-made prisoners, locking themselves away safely in their hotels while waiting to use the lobby telephone to make yet another frantic call to their embassy about getting safe passage to the French Border.

A painting of a city street at night. On the left, a dark building has a sign that reads "ARMACIA" (Pharmacy). In the center, a large, ornate building features a prominent statue of a man on a horse. A person in a long coat walks away from the viewer towards the building. The scene is lit by streetlights and the building's own lights, creating a moody atmosphere.

Emil

WEEK TWO: NORMAL DAYS?

Having watched these shakedowns from the safety of my hotel, I solved the problem day one by contracting the biggest and meanest looking thug pretending to be with the People's Force to ferry me all about town but mostly just to the KitKat Club where I had secured a gig doing portraits and revolutionary doodles for a decent coin per drawing. To insure the loyalty of my contracted tugs, I liberally added to the story and soon they well believed that I was an American Communist spy who was here to stop the demon Germans and they may have had the impression that if they did right by me, there might or might not be a future job waiting for them upon my return to report with my boss, who might be or not Stalin?...

Anyway, they were never late, took extra care to avoid trouble and turned out to be a descent lot of working class joes just trying to feed their families. God only knows what Seine had gotten into but, a large American touring car would pick him early every morning and chuffer him somewhere downtown and then return him in the evening. He was rather tight lipped about what he was doing and after all of these years, I knew better than to be a nosy cat and let all my questions lie.



WEEK TWO: NORMAL DAYS?

While Claudie has taken my idea and is masterfully turning it into a true art form, he is now a regional commander with the area's People's Force and is in the process of planning to raid several of the hotels on the outer edge of the district, best known for having a glut of rich foreigners.

They even gave him a uniform, a rather nice billy club and he says, they gave him that very nice looking pistol and belt combo.

Now to be truthful, he looked rather stupid, a cross between an upper-class English Officer of the last war (you know the polished boots, licking kind) and a Polish Admiral but, he is happy.

We all were adjusting and as we have always found a true knack for doing, we were taking controlling advantage of the chaotic situation around us to get by while earning some coins for our "Get out of Dodge" Rainy Day Fund.

It's getting late and I have to get across town to work in time for my security detail to get home and spent time with their families. I insisted on that as a condition of their continued employment (and thus their salary makes it home to their families instead of being left at some local bar) you know "that is what our great leader, Comrade Stalin personally told me once."





Emil



Emil

Emile



INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

The denizens of Madrid learned from ancient Roman Times, only the most scattered-brained would dare to brave the deadly noon day sun and as such, the city operated in shifts of early morning for the common folks to make it to their daily work and the night time, when the city came alive with the vivid energy of a people who appreciated life and knew how to live.

So the whole of the city, as a natural effect of the climate, all of the window blinds are let down, the shops up and down the wide boulevards are totally shut, the streets all go vacant, they fall empty of all humanity who can at all manage, take what the locals wax infamously about the true nature, not so virtuous but graphic interpretation of the siesta.

Claudie has been in a very deep funk and spends a large part of his day, moodily pacing all about our hotel and the lobby, he is beside himself over the loss of his recent command when his battalion of People's Force was conscripted into the Republic Home Guard Militia to help build the defenses of the city against the slowly arriving, the coming Fascist Storm and to add even more insult to him, they even asked for his uniform back.

Madrid the city is an utterly strange bird for it city of its size and statue, it is a very large and sprawling



INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

urban center but, it lacks the normal industrial basis that most cities of its size need to maintain the economics to properly flourish and prosper.

In normal times, the core financial resources of the city centered on the servicing industry, most working class people work directly or indirectly in servicing the large group of overly rich, the extremely wealthy that had (till just recently) themselves serviced the monarchy; then, there was the once massive tourism industry and the vast majority of the remaining denizens were Government Civil Servants.

In good times, this had been a good economic mixture; the vast majority of people in Madrid led a rather peaceful, fulfilling life and for the most part, there was no homeless as there are in other of the great urban cities of the Western World— as everyone who wanted to work, they could work – and they did.

Regrettably, the current state of events have reeked complete havoc and has destroyed the economic fiber that once held society together.

The monarchy has now been forcibly faded to the back pages of the history books by the Republic (or not...the civil war will determine this...I guess?) and the massive amount of Madrid's denizens who solely



INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

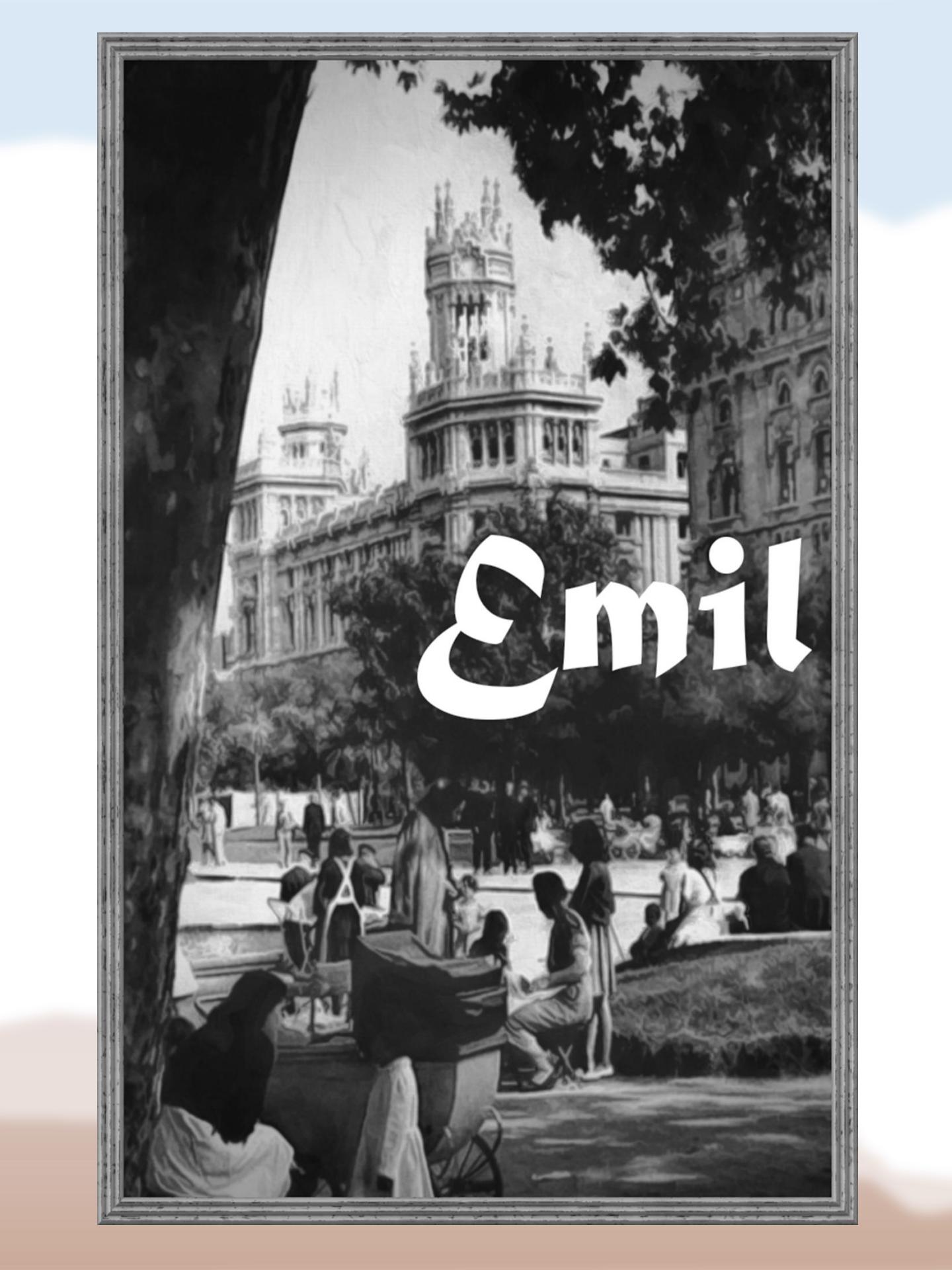
depended upon the fact that they were in the extended food chain of royal patronage or in being that they had direct lineage as a member of the surprisingly large number of extended families who claimed kinship to the monarchy; they now face the terrifying faith of being cast down into the sudden reality that the only marketable skill(s) that many of them possessed was that they had been associated with the monarchy.

Facing the reality that their status, power and wealth had evaporated literally overnight along with the monarchy, the elitists of Madrid were bitter, terror stricken by having to now live as a normal person and were not so secretly urging on the Franco Army's to hurry its march in from North Africa.

Many have cut their losses and have deserted the city while they could still liquidate property, while they were still able to move freely and they fled to rebel held areas where their status was still respected by the rank and file of those communities.

Those who stayed for whatever misguide or delusional reasoning(s) were feared as potential fifth columnists and after a short consideration, many of them were placed under house arrest or worse.

The feeling here in Madrid is much the same as what I would assume happened in Saint Petersburg (now Leningrad, Russia) in 1917 with the overthrow of the Czar.



Emil

INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

It seems that this is just human nature being played out here with Madrid as just the latest incarnation of a People's Revolution and I am sure, that if we look back to the mini-nobility of France and we would see that they faced much of the same at the beginning of the French Revolution.

Civil Servants, all of that creepy underbelly of the government's Deep State, the cadre of corrupt career workers survived as they simply continued doing (or not) their daily jobs and their life (at first) remained much unchanged.

Granted they had new bosses but, they ignored them just as much as they had their previous ones and their lives continued very much unchanged.

Later, when the financial resources of the Republic lay in shambles, with the money near worthless and their paychecks not arriving, most will have wished that they had followed their previous bosses and had joined the rebels.

The church with all the legacy of propping up the monarchy and their deep links to the elite ever since the beginning of modern Spain, faced the worse downturn and had it not been for the radical, Barrio Priests that rallied the people to raise up and overthrow of the corrupt old system; the church would have been quickly abolished with all of its great wealth and properties turned over to the Republic.



Emil

INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

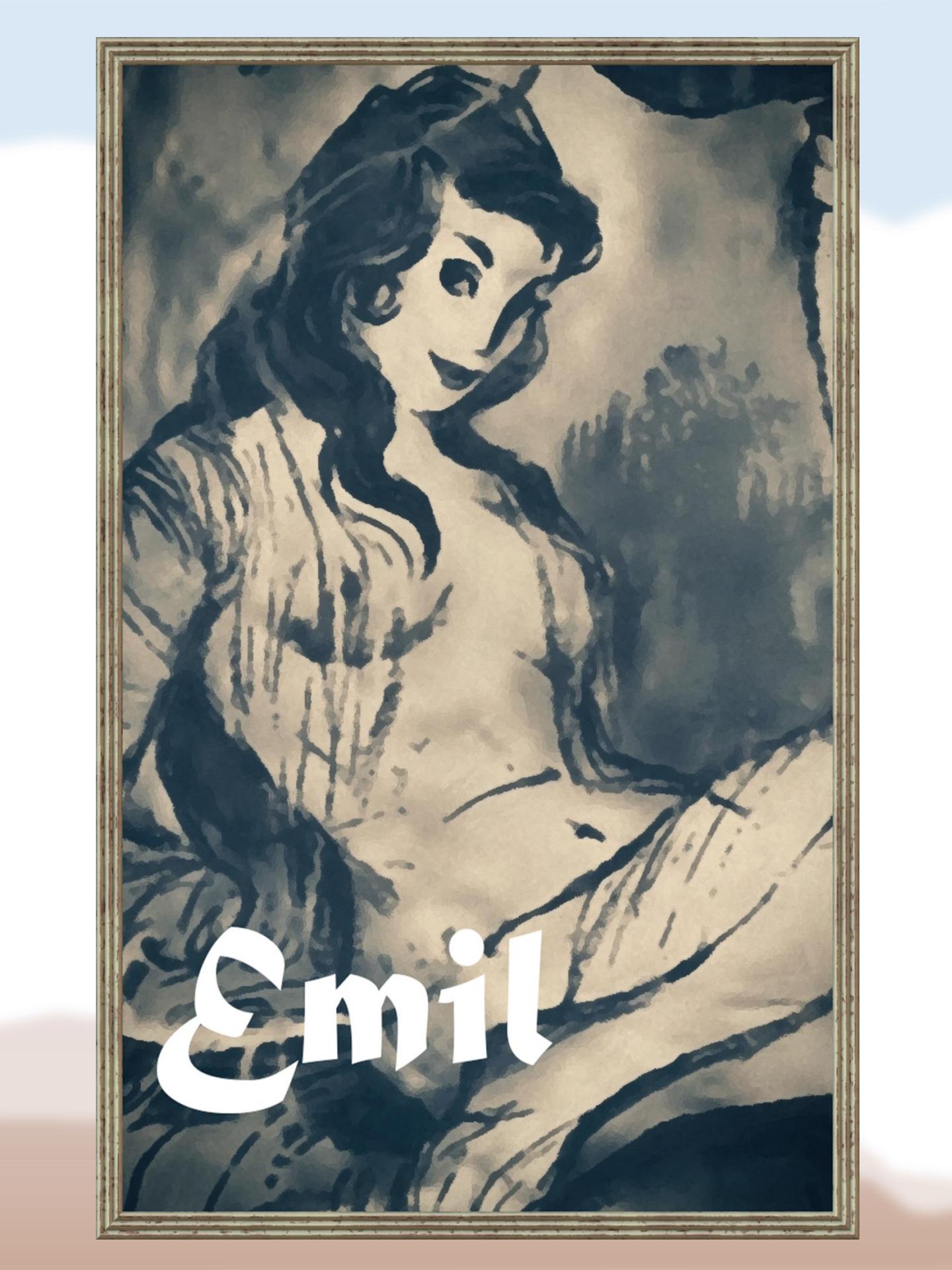
Still, the church's great power over the common people was tainted and the Republic took every opportunity to further degrade their hold on the people as the Minister of Community Affairs reminded us in the papers just yesterday...

"Religion is the opium of the masses and the church was center to the blame for the crimes that the monarchy had committed against the common man by mistakenly convincing everyone that the monarchy was operating under God's will..."

Many of the grand churches of Madrid now lay silent except for the very old and the true believers of their message about the monarchy.

It was unwise to be seen in any of these facilities as the government has been very clear that they were watching closely as the church truly is a misguided tools of the counter-revolutionary forces of the evil Franco Rebellion.

The most directly hurt was the large segment of denizens that had once worked in the tourism industry and now, with only the most very foolish who would dare the hardships to venture a pilgrimage to Madrid, this vast part of the working class had been cast down on to the street and now, stood out of the street corner trying their best to hustle a few pesos to take home and feed their families.



Emil

INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

I feel deeply for this class and that is why I still employ as many of them as I can in my security detail. They are a descent lot but, events of the times that are not in their power to control and the utter collapse of their way of life has driven them to the most desperate means.

Mr. Juan, the senior bellhop who was luck to still have his job here at the hotel, he is grateful to the hotel's respect for his thirty years of loyal service and he praises them for all their efforts to keep as much of their staff employed but, he is very troubled by what he sees as the total breakdown of civil society in the city where he was born, raised and had spent his entire working life in.

"Morality is at a low ebb in Madrid, or rather the moral code is regulated by notions peculiar to the latitude. So with habits. A man must be native and to the manner born, before he can affect competency to interpret them..."

The one fascinating truism, the heart of the city is that everybody gambles, from the shady sentries in the hotel's guard-house, to (I have been told by a local doctor who frequency stops by the hotel for a friendly game of chance with the still well-to-do foreigners still held up in the relative safety of the major hotels) to the patients in the hospitals and even felons have a taste of fast money and the smiling wink from Old Lady Luck.



Emil

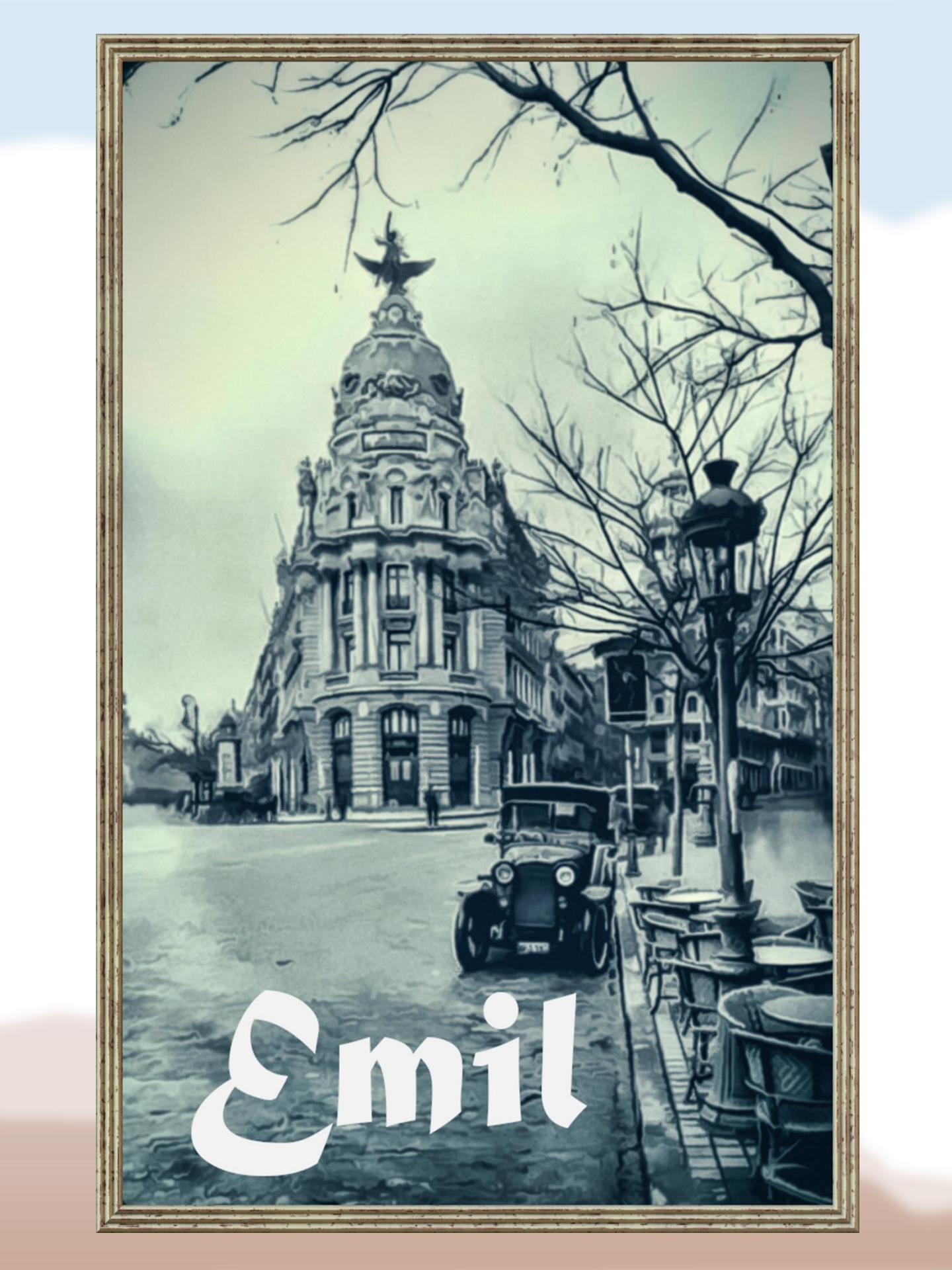
INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

This is so deeply engrained and that it holds such an overwhelming dominion of this city's passion but, our problem was in trying to find a means of how we could break in on the passion and cut ourselves a small piece of the action – we are not greedy with the open exception of our dear brother Claudie.

Part of the problem was that this has been a popular occupation since the very founding of the city, I had a local gambling boss tell me a traditional but a true story of a condemned man literally on his way to the waiting gallows begged for a just one last hand of cards with his executioners to distract him from all of his sorrows, "Seeing that he was to die, they freely granted his last wish and by the end of the game not only had he won his freedom but, he left in the warden's official car...truly a lucky man!"

This extremely well run organization and its structured business operates with multi-levels of various, related supports that employees thousands and is run out of what seemed every bar, hotel back meeting rooms, from down what seemed to be every alley to even 1000s of private homes across the city.

The quality of the organization would put Al Capone and his Chicago Boys to be rank amateurs, this is what made it impossible to get a toe in the door even to just simply placing a bet.



Emil

INTO THE HEAT OF AUGUST

It was just not possible without the proper connections or special introductions by one of the better known gaming masters.

Master schemer, Claudie says he has a plan...until then, I keep up my doddles and portraits down at the KitKat Club.

So why stay? We have the funds and Seine the connections to get us across the frontier to the French Border but, that is where our problems begin.

Seems like the French Police and Military have very long memories and never believed in "live-N-let-live." At least not for those who stood against the official slaughter of millions in a war fought over...what was it fought for?

I was there for two plus years and I have yet to figure out the true reasoning(s)...the purpose that millions of foolish but brave men (and women) died horrible deaths for.

Anyway, Minnie's Uncle Claude Sr. (Claudie's grand uncle who had been a German Spy during the war) wrote us that the authorities still had open arrest warrants for each of us over how we declared our own peace with the Germans and went back to Paris to set out the rest of the war.

You have often wondered why I didn't abandon my mates and return to be with my dear Minnie...this is why.







Emil



Emil

FINAL DAYS

The shell of the city remains intact and if you would were not too attentive, you might miss the slight changes that the civil war has brought to Madrid. Rumours run rampant and even the slightest fake news spreads like wildfire but, the reality is that Franco will never need to take the city as the Republican Government is in utter chaos, all of its official functions have broken down, most of the ministries lay vacant and desert of all but, the most dedicated communists (local Republican Hotheads and the endless number of Russians that have flooded into the city) and most of the denizens of this once great city have been reduced to nothing more than a hungry mob in many districts.

As far as we can tell, there is fighting in other parts of the country, bitter fighting and most interesting, there are more rumours about what some of the locals said was the "Abraham Lincoln" Brigade and they tell me that its ranks are filled with many Americans (veterans many of the Great War) and from what I have been told, they are mobilizing not far from Madrid.

American War Vets fighting for the Republic?
Just something wrong about this in my mind, if for no other reason than most true veterans of that war would never volunteer to go back.

A framed painting of a young boy with a red hood and a dog. The boy has a serious expression, looking directly at the viewer. He is wearing a red hooded garment. In the background, a dog's head is visible. The painting is set within a gold-colored frame.

Emil

The People's Force according to Claudio's associates have given up the fight as they have not been paid in almost five weeks and have disappeared back into the sea of the angry, hungry mobs that populate every street corner.

The mood is unsettling and even, my security detail advised me to temporarily put my work at the KitKat on hold as they can no longer secure my safety out in the streets.

Occasionally you will see or hear about small demonstrations in support of the beleaguered Republic mostly with demonstrators being paid by the Communist Youth League to prop up the public's illusion that there is still an active government at the helm of leadership.

It is hard to get anyone to speak freely as there are Republican Spies everywhere, everyone fears their neighbors as I have been told that there is a finder's fee for denouncing counter-revolutionaries, defeatists and closeted Fascists.

I have been told that it was extremely unhealthy to speak one's mind on anything other than the weather and since it is summer – which means that is a rather short and limited conversation as it is always hot.

The government's Deep State have for the most pulled up stakes, deserted their posts and in the dead of night are smuggling themselves and their families out of the city with some foolish hope that that Franco's people will take them all in.



Truly a delusional dream on their as the Franco People already know very well who these vipers are and I would not be surprised if many of them are not shot at first sight.

Once the financial crisis lead to the public shock and to the government's complete discrediting as they had to admit that it could no longer meet their weekly payroll, the Deep State of un-civil servants, pulled the plug, stripped their offices of anything of value and simply left – they didn't even bother to lock the doors behind them.

This announcement was in many ways kind of meaningless joke as the Republican Money had already lost most of its value long before they decided to pull the plug and as such, wiping out the life savings of the common man and reduced most transactions to a rudimentary form of bartering.

Foreign money was king and the only true way to get anything important done. If you held foreign money, especially English Pounds, French Francs amongst the large French Ex-Pat Community and in some parts of the city, the Italian Lira was the preferred coin of the street.

The government just floated an idea of issuing a script currency backed by the massive bales of Russian Rubles that are rumoured to be flown in to the newly reopened airport but, it was met with a call for a general strike, open protests against the Government that was rumoured to be scheduled for Sunday after mass.



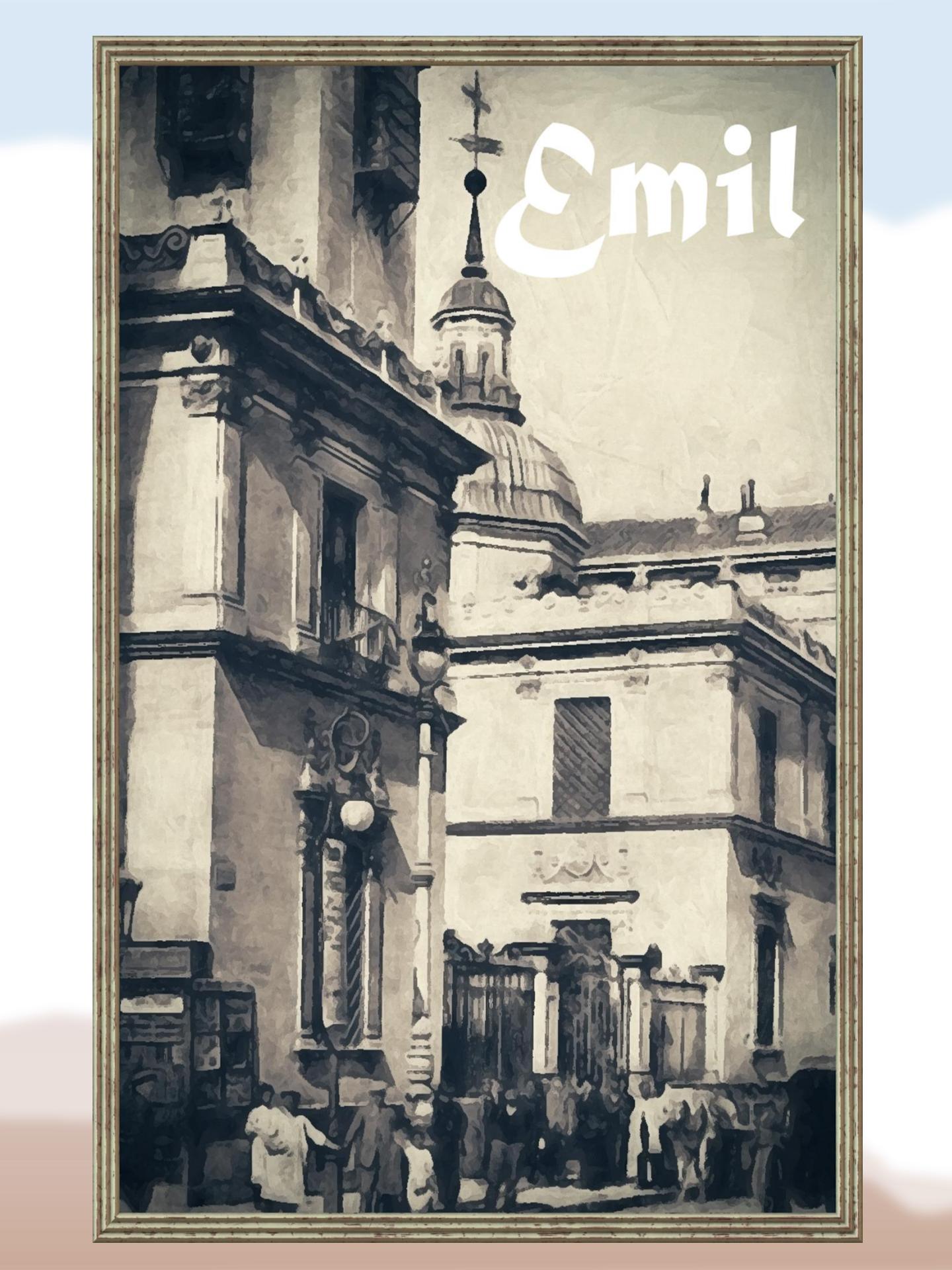
Not that they need to but, a government official that deals with Seine says that the government's financials were good until agents of Franco started dumping billions of fake Republican Pesos in disputed areas and behind the Republican Frontlines.

Counterfeit Pesos?

Why not...it wasn't necessary deed though as the government was already doomed and they seem to have done this more to punish the working class or maybe, they thought that this would lead to a public uprising.

This is where Franco's People were misguided, the Republicans had very quietly instituted strict gun control laws upon seizing power here in Madrid. Even if the populist, the denizens of Madrid had wanted to, how could they raise up without access to weaponry? The only ones with easy access to weapons were the forces loyal to the Republic which mostly consisted of the fragmented, but the remaining loyal units of the military, the local police and I have been told that large caches of weapons have been delivered to the secretive Republican Militias who have unofficially been turned into death squads who spend their days tracking down and dealing with the counter-revolutionary elements embedded in and throughout the city.

Usually, I never poke Seine for answers about what he knows as he (as always) is so tight lipped but for

A painting of a city street, possibly in Spain, featuring a church with a prominent dome and a tall steeple topped with a cross. The architecture is a mix of traditional and neoclassical styles. In the foreground, there's a gate and some figures. The painting is framed by a thick, light-colored border. In the top right corner of the image, there is a large, white, sans-serif font logo that reads "Emil".

Emil

whatever reason, I confronted him at the dinner table tonight and much to my surprise, he was very much forthcoming.

Seine believed that the government will survive this current crisis as there is massive amounts of Soviet (Russian) resources now pouring in by air (every day) and with them comes a wide cadre of support staff and veterans from both the Revolution and Russian Civil War to booster the rank and file.

He went on to say that the government was turning over more and more of the daily operations, especially here in Madrid to their Soviet guests and from what he said that he has personally saw, they will make short order to the chaos out on the streets.

Will the Republic survive?

This was something that even Seine's sources held in doubt as Franco was even better financed by the Germans who seem to have given all of the latest and most advanced weapon systems in the world to this otherwise, rag-tag rebellion army.

From the modern carbines and machine guns to advanced city-leveling artillery to even the most modern air bombers in the German Fleet, Franco's Army seriously in consistently outgunning the beleaguered, equipment strapped Republican forces. Seine believe that there is a core segment of the population who truly believe in the Republican fight and wherever Franco's forces have encountered



them, the battles are very bloody and the death count extremely high – as these Republican troops never falter nor fall back or surrender.

Because, of there great heart for the fight and their utter and full dedication to their socialist cause...this fighting spirit amongst certain divisons in the Republican Home Guard and their true willingness to die in defense of the Republic, Seine said that this war will go on for a long time.

Seine finished his lecture by suggesting that we might start thinking about finding our way out of this pickle especially as he casually mentioned rumors that we had not heard of Madrid being bombed or at least the Germans trying to stop the flow of arms and supplies by bombing the airport. I dismissed that very idea as even the Germans would not dare bomb major urban cities...

"Maybe a stray zeppelin dropping an occasional bomb to spread panic but, not an outright attack on a city like Madrid...that is not done by civilized, modern armies, thank you very much!!!"

"Anyway, we need to start planning...how do you chaps feel about Moscow?"

Seine said in in his most solemn voice as he finished his meal and went upstairs to sleep.





Emil



AFTERTHOUGHTS

By the time that Franco and his amassed minions arrived at the ancient gates of Madrid on the 4th of November 1936 we were long gone, just an old grease stain along the highway of life and we were well on our way to yet another paying gig in the Chinese City of Nanking, China.

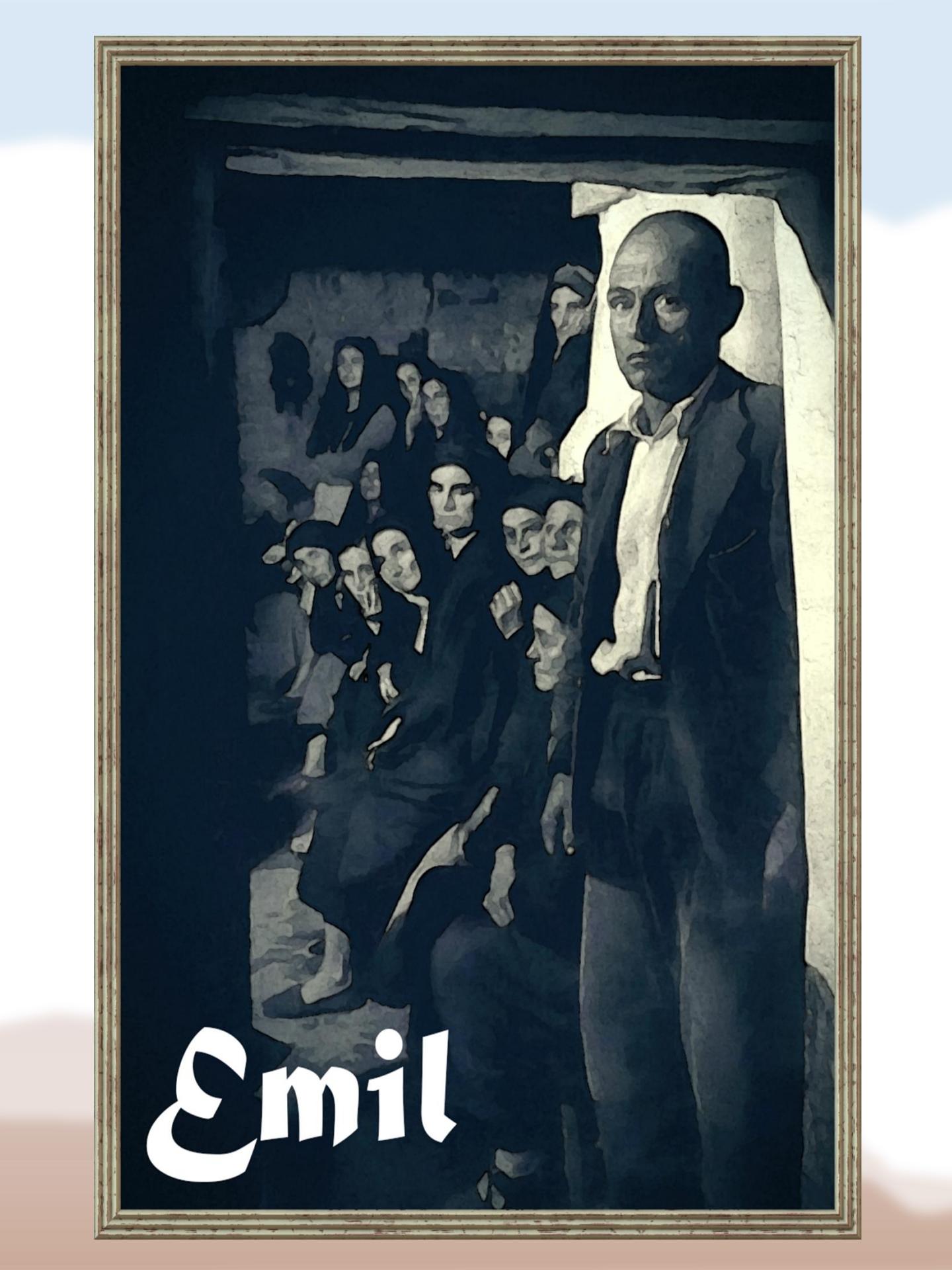
Seine had been right and I was wrong about the German air warfare intentions, they first bombed the airport to put an end to the pipeline that kept the city alive and then turned on the helpless city.

More so, Seine had called the fact that Madrid would not just roll over and the battle was long, ugly with a great deal of death and destruction.

The city with its dedicated core cadre of true believers, Russian (Soviet) Veterans and even elements of American War Veterans fighting under the banner of the "Abraham Lincoln" Brigade fought well beyond what reasonable people would have thought necessary, only causing just more senseless slaughter to the helpless. In the end, the results were the same, Franco and his now formidable army (funded and some say, led to run by German Commanders) won hands down.

No one with any sense would have bet otherwise.

History will look back and call this a fortune teller of the coming World War where Russians and Americans fought the Germans with as much glee as they had here in Madrid.



Emil





Emil West is in Singapore.

1 min - ▾

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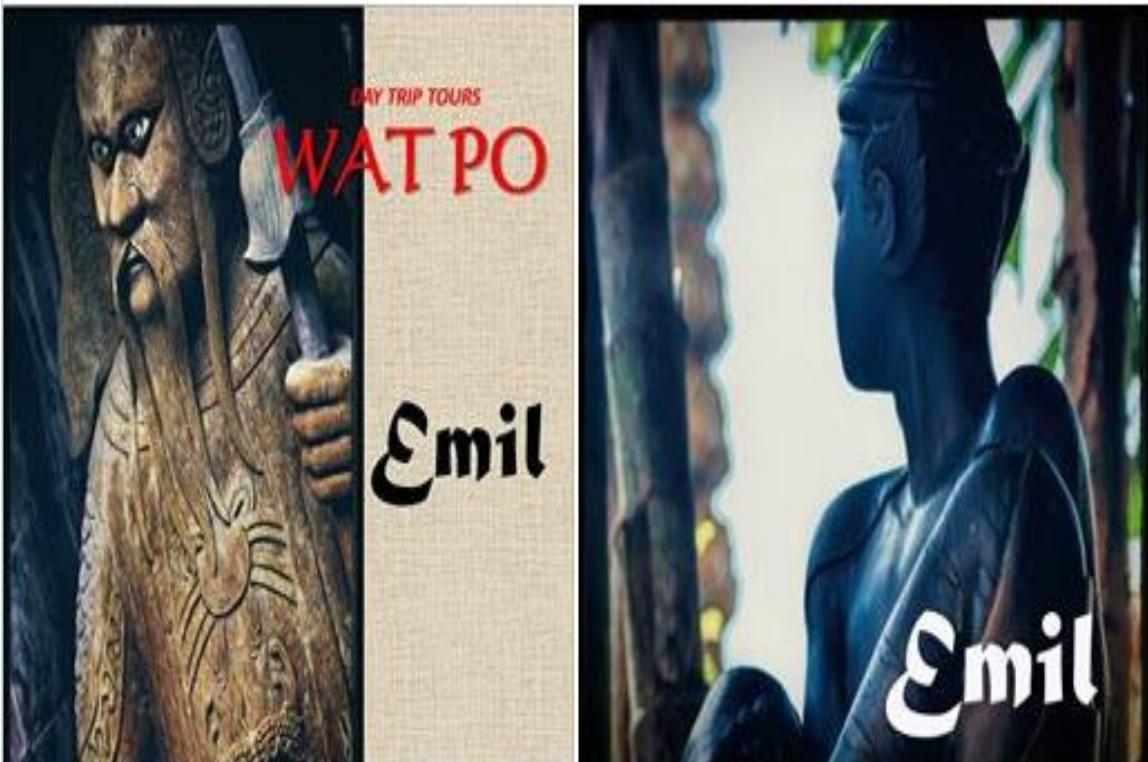
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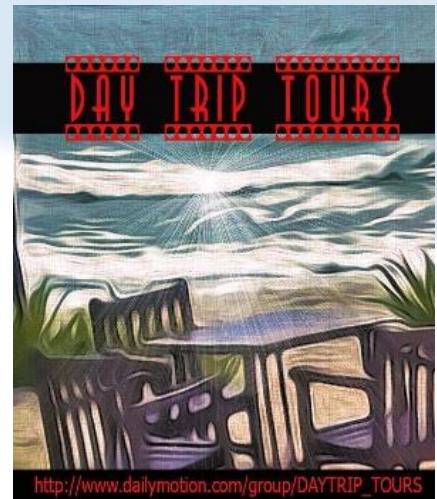
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